United Nations A/57/PV.69

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-seventh session

69th plenary meeting
Friday, 6 December 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 21 and 37 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(d) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/57/410, A/57/487)

Draft resolution A/57/L.56

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): Our deliberations are being held at a time of special significance, in the light of the first anniversary of the Bonn Agreement, which was marked yesterday, 5 December 2002. Indeed, this is a fitting occasion to recall that milestone event, which ended 23 years of violence and strife and opened a new chapter of hope and promise for the people of Afghanistan. The Bonn gathering of Afghan participants was historic in that they overcame their differences and, together, laid out a road map for the return of their country to lasting peace and sustainable development.

Over the past year we have welcomed a number of significant developments. Foremost among them was the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga and the inauguration of the Transitional Administration under President Hamid Karzai. My delegation supports the ongoing efforts of the Transitional Administration to meet its goals, particularly in the fields of security, economic development, human rights and good governance. For the Afghan people, the Emergency Loya Jirga marked a turning point in which they became full participants in their country's unfolding political processes. We hope that all factions will now work in concert to sustain the peace process. Such a framework of cooperation and harmony should bode well for the 2004 elections called for by the Bonn Agreement, and will thereby establish a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government.

The restoration of law and order is key to ensuring a stable environment in Afghanistan. As the overall security situation remains fragile and complex, the international community should accord particular attention to security issues. In that regard, we acknowledge the valuable role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in improving security conditions in Afghanistan.

As in any situation, the cornerstone of peace and democracy is economic and social development. In the case of Afghanistan the need is even more chronic and immediate. My delegation highly values the efforts of

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-73036 (E)

United Nations agencies to expand the capacity of the Transitional Administration at every level. In that regard, the international community has an important responsibility to expedite assistance for long-term reconstruction programmes.

Furthermore, ongoing multilateral efforts should be underpinned by the endeavours of the Afghan people themselves to promote law and order, stability and good governance. My delegation further believes that it is of the utmost importance for both the private and public sectors of Afghan society to be equipped with competent and effective human resources so that they can meet their national goals at this crucial stage in their country's history.

For its part, my Government was pleased to be part of international efforts aimed at the reconstruction of Afghanistan. As it pledged at the Tokyo donors conference of January 2002, the Republic of Korea will provide Afghanistan with up to $45 million through 2004.

Just over a year ago, the prospects for peace in Afghanistan seemed distant. Today, the people of Afghanistan are being offered a new opportunity to restore normalcy to their lives and to provide a better future for themselves and for the generations to come. We wish them success so that the vision outlined in Bonn a year ago will become a reality.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to applaud the dedication and commitment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, as well as the entire staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, for carrying out their mandate under rather challenging circumstances.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): At the outset, permit me to commend the initiative of the President of the General Assembly in convening the recent panel discussion on Afghanistan, which enabled us to gain a comprehensive overview of the situation in that country.

A year ago, the historic meeting in Bonn paved the way for the establishment of the Afghanistan Transitional Administration and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to address the immediate needs of a country devastated by decades of war and neglect. While the international community and the United Nations played a crucial role in the transformation of Afghanistan, my delegation also wishes to pay tribute to the central role played by the Afghan people themselves and to their unceasing efforts to rebuild their country. The Loya Jirga took place against all odds and the Transitional Administration was established on schedule. Under the leadership of President Karzai, a functioning mechanism of governance has been installed, including the constitutional and judicial reform commissions.

However, the international community must continue to support adequately the central Afghan Authority's efforts to overcome its multifaceted nation-building challenges. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the declaration issued in St. Petersburg last Monday, which, among other things, mapped out the remaining tasks to implement the Bonn Agreement. It also endorsed the creation of the Afghan national army by the Afghanistan Transitional Administration and underlined the need to establish clear benchmarks and guidelines towards the full accomplishment of the Bonn agenda. My delegation underlines the importance of strengthening the capability of the central Afghan Authority to provide security as an integral component of a long-term goal of establishing a truly democratic, stable and functioning multi-ethnic State.

Despite the achievements made thus far, Afghanistan is still not a post-conflict State and security concerns continue to be a top priority. Throughout the year, sporadic fighting in the provinces continued unabated and assassinations have claimed the lives of major Administration officials. President Karzai himself has been the object of an assassination attempt. Aid workers continue to be assaulted in Kabul and security problems are therefore a serious impediment to the reconstruction process. Without security, there can be no meaningful and genuine reconstruction. The frustration of the Afghan people on the slow pace of reconstruction efforts, particularly in the provinces, could result in future unrest and create opportunities for the re-emergence of extremist forces, as well as breeding grounds for terrorism. We must therefore address Afghanistan's reconstruction needs now.

The Transitional Administration also needs sustained support in strengthening its capacity to provide security, particularly in areas outside Kabul, where faction leaders maintain control, notwithstanding their pledge of cooperation with the central Administration. In this context, we welcome Security Council resolution 1444 (2002), expanding the mandate of ISAF for another year under the joint leadership of Germany and the

Netherlands. We also welcome the lead taken by the United States, France and Germany to establish the Afghan national police and army.

Rebuilding a nation that has hardly been at peace for over two decades is a daunting task, to say the least. The international community must therefore maintain staunch and generous support for Afghanistan, bearing in mind its fragility. The international community should thus renew and sustain its support for Afghanistan's challenges not only of peaceful reconstruction, but also of development, the restoration of law and order, and the implementation of the remaining elements of the Bonn agenda, including the drafting and ratification of a new Constitution and the organization of general elections.

We hope the Philippine Government's contribution to the inter-agency emergency humanitarian plan for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries in 2001 and its pledge at the Tokyo ministerial conference held earlier this year will add to the resources needed to meet Afghanistan's humanitarian and reconstruction needs. Moreover, the Philippines is committed to assisting Afghanistan in its reconstruction efforts, to the training of the Afghan people in the fields of health care, potable water and sanitation, agriculture and irrigation, and civil and transport engineering.

On drug eradication, my delegation commends President Karzai and his team for making it an early priority of his Administration. Sustained and due attention should be given to crop substitution programmes to discourage farmers from returning to poppy cultivation.

The Philippine Government realizes the delicate balance that should be struck among all the competing needs for resources in Afghanistan to address security, humanitarian, reconstruction and development concerns. The return of 1.7 million Afghans attests to their faith in the new central Afghan Authority and to their determination to rebuild their country. The international community cannot afford to have these hopes frustrated.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the United Nations central role in the Afghanistan reconstruction process through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In this regard, we commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Brahimi, for his active role.

In closing, my delegation is a sponsor and warmly supports the adoption of the draft resolution on Afghanistan to be adopted at the conclusion of this plenary debate.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): With the establishment of the Interim Authority in December 2001 and the Transitional Administration in June 2002 and the convening of the June Emergency Loya Jirga, Afghanistan has embarked on the road of national renaissance and reconciliation. The relentless fighting of more than two decades has at last come to an end. The recovery and reconstruction of the war-torn country have started with massive emergency international humanitarian assistance.

The Secretary-General's report clearly demonstrates that providing humanitarian aid to a country where both physical and institutional infrastructures have been destroyed represents in itself a formidable challenge to the international community. Nevertheless, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan has so far successfully carried out its mandate. The reach and efficiency of United Nations assistance, ranging from emergency response to natural calamities to the rehabilitation of health and education sectors, as well as clearance of unexploded ordnance and demining, deserve the warmest appreciation of the world community. They are testimony to the fact that, when political will and perseverance to achieve a goal are present, there are no insurmountable difficulties.

The Transitional Administration of Afghanistan has also substantially improved the overall security situation by re-establishing government institutions in major urban centres and its gradual expansion at the local level. However, lack of security remains one of the major obstacles to reconstruction efforts and undermines the authority of the Administration.

Peace and security are the essential prerequisites for the creation of an environment that will allow the establishment and normal functioning of political and social institutions as the pillars of a stable and prosperous society. Peace and security are also the key to the solution of the immense humanitarian problems confronting Afghanistan, where almost one third of the entire population is dependent on some form of emergency assistance. Restoring security, enhancing the legitimacy of the Government and building its capacity to govern effectively over the entire country are therefore the main

issues confronting the Transitional Administration, and the international community in general.

The reform process initiated by the Transitional Administration, its commitment to reduce bureaucracy, corruption and inefficiency and, in particular, its legislative acts to promote financial sector stability have brought tangible results, as evidenced by the increased flow of private investment in the economy.

Noticeable progress has also been achieved in socio-economic development. That progress includes increased economic activity in major cities, the re-emergence of women as truly empowered and active social partners and improved health and nutrition among the population, as well as progress in the areas of repatriation, reintegration and the revitalization of the agricultural sector. Mongolia is proud to be among the States rendering assistance in the health sector. Educational and cultural institutions have been reopened, and public media and civic societies are conducting their activities openly after many years of suppression.

However, as the Secretary-General's report and previous speakers have underlined, despite the significant achievements, there are many pressing issues requiring urgent action on the part of the international community. Those issues include the humanitarian needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. The livelihood of the Afghani people, which has been disrupted by prolonged war, are further compounded by reoccurring drought and the resulting decrease in agricultural production. That is a familiar picture in a poor developing country where agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy. Similarly, three consecutive years of drought and harsh winters in Mongolia have also dealt severe blows to my Government's efforts to reform the agricultural sector. That has also served to impose a heavy burden on already strained financial resources.

The General Assembly's open-ended panel on the theme "Afghanistan: one year later", which was held in November, provided deeper insight into the inherent problems facing that country and produced a number interesting and useful ideas. We believe that many of those ideas deserve careful scrutiny, and some may even serve as the basis for further actions to be taken by the international community. The panel identified nationwide security, institution-building, reconstruction, economic revival and outside interference as areas of persistent concern in Afghanistan's endeavour to rebuild the country. I have already touched on the first three issues, and would now like to say a few words on the subject of outside interference.

Looking back to landlocked Afghanistan's tormented history, we can indeed easily see that the root causes of internal conflict in that country have mainly been connected with outside interference. During the 1990s various warlord factions were armed and supported from the outside, thereby deepening animosity and division in Afghan society. The same could happen during the transition period, because the central authority is relatively weak in remote rural areas. During the open-ended panel discussion several practical suggestions were made, including a call for more meaningful commitment to non-interference by neighbouring States and a United Nations mechanism to facilitate dialogue between Afghanistan and its neighbours on such issues of mutual concern as non-interference, the return of refugees, the drug trade and border security. In the opinion of my delegation, those and other useful suggestions need to be taken into consideration in developing future strategies to enhance national security, ensure a peaceful transition and guarantee the stability of Afghanistan. While underlining security as the priority, we should not lose sight of economic revival, which, in the long run, will be the cornerstone for a prosperous and stable Afghan society.

In view of the immense humanitarian needs, the continued and sustained assistance of the international community is an important prerequisite for the success of recovery and reconstruction in Afghanistan. As has been pointed out, the reintegration of the 2 million refugees who returned to their motherland represents both a formidable challenge as well as a vote of confidence in the Transitional Administration. With that in mind, we should keep the attention of the international community focused on Afghanistan throughout the entire period of its transition and reconstruction.

Bearing all this in mind, the delegation of Mongolia would like to become a sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/57/L.56.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): My delegation has already associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. In the light of Turkey's deep-rooted historical ties with Afghanistan, I would like to add the following remarks.

One year has passed since the signing of the Bonn Agreement. The draft resolution that we are about to adopt today indeed corresponds with the anniversary of a turning point in the history of the Afghan people. Through that draft resolution, which comprehensively addresses the political and humanitarian issues facing Afghanistan, we will be able to display our solidarity with this long-suffering people and to demonstrate our determination to assist them in these times of difficulty and hardship.

The Agreement reached in Bonn was the first step towards establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan and ending the great suffering the Afghan people have experienced during the past 20 years. Today the Afghan people need to rebuild their unity and harmony. The torment experienced by the Afghan people only serves to vindicate their aspiration to national reconciliation. For the future of the country, it is of paramount importance that the process of reconciliation in Afghanistan be a durable one. Now is the time for the international community to fulfil the pledges it made at the Tokyo Conference and to give the necessary assistance to Afghanistan in order to ensure the viability of Bonn Agreement.

Some of the positive developments to have taken place in Afghanistan in recent months include the return of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, progress in implementing education and health programmes and the establishment of the commissions mandated under the Bonn Agreement. In order to continue with the positive developments and to extend the central Government's authority to all the regions of the country, which is essential for the success of the Bonn process, the international community must continue and accelerate its political, economic and technical help through the central Government in Afghanistan.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been playing an important role in improving security conditions in and around Kabul. However, the lack of security is still the most serious challenge facing Afghanistan and the Afghan people. The establishment of a national army and a police force is important in order to maintain security throughout the country. Efforts towards that end should be accelerated. It is also essential that the warlords be integrated into the system in conformity with the realities of Afghanistan. They should cooperate with the central Government.

The Afghan people deserve to take their rightful place among the family of the world's nations as citizens of a respectful and stable State. In that process, it is incumbent upon the international community to respect and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Centrifugal tendencies will only serve to derail what is already a very delicate and sensitive process. Therefore, in order to ensure stability, neighbouring countries should desist from intervening in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and should not take sides among the warlords.

Another important priority in Afghanistan is to combat the illicit production of, and trafficking in, drugs. In order to prevent that, the international community should provide support to eliminate the illicit cultivation of poppies in Afghanistan, and lend its assistance to programmes aimed at drug substitution and drug control capacity-building.

The important objectives of reconstruction, the re-establishment of government institutions and demobilization require the continued support of the international community. Foreign aid should be concentrated mainly on reconstruction, and must be administered through the central Government. The effective allocation of foreign aid is also vital to ensuring the usefulness of the reconstruction process.

Turkey has deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with the Afghan people that date back to the early 1920s. As a longstanding friend with no hidden agenda or special interest, other than Afghanistan's stability and well-being, we have always been willing to assume an important role in efforts geared towards securing the development of that friendly nation. Turkey's historic experience enables it to provide substantial support to the process of reconciliation and rehabilitation of the country. We assumed command of ISAF in Kabul to help ensure the necessary conditions to achieve a viable security environment. In addition to our resolve to help Afghanistan, we assumed that responsibility as a result of our firm stance with regard to international cooperation against terrorism. My country utilizes every opportunity in the international arena to draw the international community's attention to the importance of honouring the pledges made to Afghanistan as soon as possible.

In addition to collaborating with the international community on Afghanistan's reconstruction, Turkey is carrying out its own various reconstruction projects in

the country. Training programmes are in place for various ministries, including the Ministries for Foreign Affairs, Water and Electricity, Irrigation and Development. In the field of health, in addition to the training provided to Afghan doctors in Turkey, we continue to send groups of specialized doctors to various regions of Afghanistan and to rehabilitate some of the country's hospitals and health clinics and to construct new ones. In the field of agriculture, our projects in Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif will soon be implemented.

We stand ready to augment our contribution in rebuilding Afghanistan as a politically united nation enjoying friendly relations with all of its neighbours. We will continue our constructive efforts towards that end. We should all be ready to contribute to such an outcome. It is with that purpose in mind that Turkey is a supporter and sponsor of the draft resolution on Afghanistan.

I would like to conclude by thanking the German delegation for its efficient cooperation in the drafting of this draft resolution, which will, without a doubt, constitute an important step in the right direction.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President for having organized a panel discussion on the theme of "Afghanistan: one year later", which was instrumental in bringing about further awareness among the international community of the challenges facing the people and Government of Afghanistan. That lively interactive dialogue promoted a better vision of what else must be done to achieve the goals of the United Nations in that war-stricken country.

One year ago, under the auspices of the United Nations, a milestone accord was signed at Bonn that paved the way for a political transition in Afghanistan. Since then, the Organization has been at the forefront of efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

My delegation commends the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi, and his staff for their fruitful activities in Afghanistan to meet, mostly on schedule, the main milestones of the peace-building process: to establish the Interim Authority, to hold the Emergency Loya Jirga, to establish the Transitional Administration and to set up various commissions. None of that would have been possible without the active participation of the Government and President of Afghanistan.

Joint efforts have led to positive developments in Afghanistan, including the back-to-school campaign, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homeland and places of origin, the establishment of constitutional and judicial commissions, the formation of a civil service and human rights commissions and the adoption of a series of national laws and decrees to promote international investment. These are significant achievements for a country where the peace process began only recently.

During his statement to the plenary of the General Assembly, President Karzai presented a very important message, namely, that after 23 years of imposed wars, Afghans are on their way to enjoying peace and benefiting from reconstruction, and that they are determined to take every measure to avoid a relapse into warlordism and lawlessness. That message clearly indicated that the long-suffering Afghan people should not be left alone once again.

The time has come to provide assistance to Afghanistan and its Government to reconstruct the country and return confidence to its people. We must also think of the future political system of Afghanistan, so that it meets the expectations of the Afghan people and brings sustainable peace and development to the region. In the view of my Government, the power and authority of the central Government must be strengthened by providing more autonomy to the provinces, which they possessed for a number of years during the civil war, and even earlier. That task is of paramount historical importance, and it needs a comprehensive evaluation by the Afghan people and the international community.

In his message to the panel, the Secretary-General said that the challenges facing Afghanistan remain immense — from security to development to creating political and social institutions. Today the most serious challenge facing the Afghan people is the lack of security, which has a negative impact on all aspects of the peace process. The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security states that no region of the country has escaped conflict. Skirmishes between rival factions still take place everywhere. The creation of an effective national security structure therefore remains the most urgent task. It is highly commendable that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which is playing a crucial role in maintaining stability in Kabul, works closely with the Government

in building the national army and police force of Afghanistan. We continue to believe that the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force beyond Kabul would have a great impact on the security situation in the region. In fact, all the elements of the peace process, including the political, economic and security aspects, are interlinked.

From the very start, Kazakhstan has resolutely and unconditionally supported counter-terrorist actions by the international coalition. Its effective measures have contributed without any doubt to the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. We intend to take a most active part in implementing an international aid programme for Afghanistan. My Government is cooperating successfully with the World Food Programme, through which Kazakhstan has delivered approximately 94,000 tons of grain. Part of that delivery was provided to the Afghan people on a free basis.

We believe that the international community must support sustainable recovery and reconstruction efforts, providing effective assistance to help the Afghan people to go back to a normal and peaceful life. An early implementation of the decisions adopted at the Tokyo Conference would contribute to the successful solution of the Afghan problem and to the eradication of international terrorism. The donor countries should redouble their efforts in rebuilding Afghan society by translating international pledges into concrete contributions.

When we speak about Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the issue of drug trafficking. Over the past year, following the Bonn Agreement, Afghanistan has continued to be a main source of the proliferation of drugs that have been transported through the territories of the Central Asian States and sold on the world markets, above all in Europe.

This problem is becoming more and more dangerous and requires the taking of urgent and effective measures by the community of nations. We hope that the coordinating role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will be strengthened. One has to realize that drug trafficking constitutes a financial basis of the international terrorism that threatens the security not only of the Central Asian States, but of the entire world.

When we put up a just fight against this evil, we, unfortunately, fight its manifestations and do not pay due attention to the root cause of this phenomenon. If this state of affairs remains unchanged, curbing international terrorism will turn into an indefinite process that will exhaust all the financial and political resources of the community of nations.

The peace process in Afghanistan has now entered a new phase. The Secretary-General, in his report on emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan, has highlighted numerous formidable tasks that lie ahead. My delegation concurs with the view that recovery and reconstruction can be sustained only through the integration of Afghanistan into the mainstream of legitimate regional economic activity, the provision of disincentives to the resurgence of violence, and consistent donor support.

The draft resolution under consideration today, having an unprecedented number of sponsors, including my country, reflects the commitment of the international community to Afghanistan and it is highly important for the Afghan Government to collaborate with the international community in building a new State.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): One year has passed since the signing of the Bonn Agreement and the inauguration of the Interim Authority of Afghanistan.

Important progress has been achieved in the course of this year. The process of developing a democratic society based on the rule of law has started. A serious humanitarian crisis has been avoided. Reconstruction and infrastructure development are under way. In June, the Emergency Loya Jirga elected President Karzai as Head of State and established a legitimate Government, the Afghan Transitional Authority. The Constitutional, Judicial and Human Rights Commissions have been established in accordance with the Bonn Agreement. It is vital to continue implementing the political objectives of the Bonn Agreement, a process that will culminate with the general elections in 2004.

In the meantime, there are many important tasks to be done. The fragile security situation is of special concern to my Government. Unless the situation is stabilized, it will continue to threaten the political process and the socio-economic development of the country. This fragile situation shows the urgent need for a national army, a civilian police force and a well-functioning judicial system. Factional leaders must be brought under the control of the central Authority.

A stable security situation is of crucial importance for establishing a democratic culture in Afghanistan and essential if the country is to succeed in holding fair and transparent elections in 2004. The International Security Assistance Force has a crucial role to play in securing peace and stability in Kabul and its surroundings. Norway is making a substantial contribution to the force and has offered to contribute under the Dutch and German leadership.

The positive developments within Afghanistan's borders must be accompanied by stability outside its borders. Norway therefore supports the efforts to adopt a declaration on good-neighbourly relations between Afghanistan and its neighbours. I would also like to emphasize that the Afghan Transitional Authority must fully support and facilitate the work of the Constitutional, Judicial and Human Rights Commissions. The Commissions have a crucial role to play in promoting respect for the rule of law and internationally recognized human rights, including the rights of women and children.

Afghanistan is still facing major humanitarian problems. A poor harvest, drought and the return of nearly 2 million refugees and internally displaced have left a large proportion of the population dependent on international assistance. This assistance is vitally important, but it is equally important for donors to contribute to long-term reconstruction and socio-economic development. Norway is therefore encouraged by the National Development Budget, which clearly reflects the Afghans' resolute leadership and focus on reconstruction and job-creating activities. This also includes capacity- and institution-building, centrally and locally.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge the Afghan Transitional Authority to integrate women's issues and a gender perspective into the overall National Development Budget. Women must be allowed to participate in all parts and at all levels of the reconstruction and peace-building processes.

The positive developments in Afghanistan over the past year are first and foremost a result of the efforts of the Afghan people and their leaders. In addition, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Special Representative Brahimi must be commended for their tireless efforts. Norway fully supports the concept of an integrated United Nations mission and a light international footprint. The main aims must be to transfer responsibility and capacity to the Afghan authorities and to bring about development in all regions of the country.

In spite of the positive developments in Afghanistan, the country's needs are still overwhelming. A long-term commitment from the international community is crucial. I take this opportunity to urge all donors to honour the pledges they made at the Tokyo ministerial meeting.

Rebuilding Afghanistan will be a time-consuming task. Norway is therefore committed to long-term engagement in the country. Our pledge of 350 million Norwegian kroner for 2002 has been almost fully disbursed. Subject to parliamentary approval, we will keep our assistance at a high level next year.

As the Chair of the Afghanistan Support Group, Norway will host its annual meeting in Oslo on 17 and 18 December. We are very pleased that President Karzai will be able to attend the meeting, which will also provide an opportunity to pledge further support to Afghanistan. As Chair of the Afghanistan Support Group, Norway fully supports the Transitional Administration's eagerness to move towards a consultative group mechanism that will put the Afghan Government firmly in the driver's seat, with other actors playing a supportive role.

Despite the importance of the efforts of the international community, the main responsibility for rebuilding a democratic and prosperous Afghanistan rests with the Afghan people and their leaders. In that long and challenging process, however, Norway will continue to assist in any way it can.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I would like to thank the President for his initiative to convene this meeting, just one year after the signing of the Bonn Agreement. I believe it will provide us with a very useful opportunity to reinvigorate the peace process in Afghanistan.

The recent history of Afghanistan has shown us how an abandoned State can become a hotbed of terrorism, and thus pose a serious threat to the peace and stability of the international community as a whole. Following the attacks of 11 September, Japan promptly joined the international effort to combat terrorism by sending its Self-Defence Force vessels to the Indian Ocean to support coalition forces deployed there and by having its Self-Defence Force aircraft engage in air transport activities. Those activities are still ongoing.

We recognize, however, that such efforts alone are not sufficient to fully address the problems confronting Afghanistan. In order to consolidate the peace process in that country and to reinforce counter-terrorism activities, it is necessary to pursue efforts in a broad range of areas — including those pertaining to the political, domestic security, humanitarian and reconstruction spheres — all of which are closely interrelated.

The reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts undertaken since the very earliest stage, even before the Bonn Agreement, should be given due credit for the progress that has been made in restoring peace in Afghanistan. Moreover, at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, which was held in Tokyo in January of this year, as much as $4.5 billion was pledged, including a pledge of more than $1.8 billion for 2002. That response sends a strong message of support from the international community to the Afghan people, and constitutes a concrete peace dividend.

I am pleased to state in this connection that, for its part, Japan has so far allocated or disbursed $282 million in accordance with its pledge, and has become the first country to fulfil in full its first-year contribution pledge made at the Tokyo Conference. Japan's total contribution, including humanitarian assistance, now amounts to $375 million. It could be said that Japan's contribution is a crystallization of the concept of the consolidation of peace, which was announced last May by Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. That concept focuses our efforts on three major pillars, namely, the peace process, domestic security and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

During the past year, we have witnessed considerable progress, thanks to the efforts by Ambassador Brahimi, all the relevant United Nations agencies and other donor communities, and especially by the Afghan people themselves, under the leadership of President Karzai. Nevertheless, Afghanistan is still confronted with enormous challenges. Today I would like to raise four points to bear in mind as we move forward.

First, the peace process must be consolidated. It is important to extend further assistance to the Transitional Authority to strengthen its administrative capacity in order to better advance the process. Among our major contributions in this field are $50 million in non-project grant aid and the project to improve the equipment of the Kabul television station.

Secondly, security must be ensured throughout the country in order for humanitarian and reconstruction work to proceed. Despite the tremendous contributions of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the progress that has been made in building a national army and civilian police force, the security situation is still precarious, especially in the provinces. Japan urges all Afghan groups to cooperate fully with the Transitional Authority. At the same time, we underscore the importance of efforts by the international community to improve security in Afghanistan. Japan is strengthening its contribution by extending assistance to the civilian police and by engaging in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts and in demining activities, as well as in counter-narcotics measures, in close cooperation with the relevant United Nations agencies. Moreover, as a leading State in the field of DDR, Japan will accelerate preparations for the "Register for Peace" programme. Under that programme, former combatants who are committed to living peacefully are registered and then provided vocational training and employment opportunities, thus facilitating their reintegration into the community.

Thirdly, it is necessary to continue efforts to ensure a seamless transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and reconstruction assistance. The Government of Japan commends the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghan People, which has enabled millions of refugees and internally displaced persons to return home. Those people continue to be in urgent need of assistance in preparing for winter. At the same time, we must also recognize the tremendous challenge of absorbing all those people and integrating them into local communities. In order to help Afghanistan meet that challenge, the international community should reorder the assistance it provides and refocus its efforts from the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance to medium- and longer-term reconstruction work. The 2003 Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghan People to be launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) later this month, will be an important step forward in that direction.

Fourthly, as a result of the assistance that has been extended, comprehensive development and visible

progress are also necessary especially in the provinces. We believe that from now on reconstruction work should be intensively pursued in the provinces under the aegis of the Afghanistan Transitional Authority. The development of basic infrastructure is essential in order for local communities to be able to accept and integrate returned refugees and internally displaced persons.

These people must be given reason to hope that their living conditions will become better tomorrow. Towards that end, the Government of Japan has launched the Regional Comprehensive Development Assistance Programme — also known as the Ogata Initiative — the overall objective of which is to strengthen the basic capacity of regional communities. Under this Programme, we will extend assistance for shelter, water, health, education, food, demining and income-generation to Kandahar, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif, which have been identified as priority regions. These efforts will be linked to road reconstruction, basic infrastructure and agricultural development programmes being undertaken by bilateral and multilateral development agencies. The Project for Primary Road Rehabilitation between Kandahar and Kabul, jointly funded by Japan, Saudi Arabia and the United States, and other road projects currently being implemented are also important in this connection.

Afghanistan poses challenges that the international community must meet in order to prove that it can successfully deal with post-conflict situations. While significant progress has been made, the goal of a stable and viable Afghanistan is still a long way off. We must therefore strengthen our efforts to encourage and support the Afghan people to successfully achieve the next milestone, the convening of a constitutional loya jirga. One year after the Bonn Agreement, it is essential that we remain steadfast in our commitment to the achievement of lasting peace in Afghanistan.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on sub-item (d) of agenda item 21 and agenda item 37.

I should now like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider draft resolution A/57/L.56. In this connection, since the draft resolution was circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees to consider draft resolution A/57/L.56 immediately.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.56, which has two parts. Part A is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security" and Part B is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guyana, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Nauru, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkmenistan.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.56?

Draft resolution A/57/L.56 was adopted (resolutions 57/113 A and 57/113 B).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 21 and of agenda item 37.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.